

WOODWORTH'S PATENT.

JANUARY 16, 1857.—Laid on the table and ordered to be printed.

Mr. MORGAN, from the Committee on Patents, made the following

REPORT.

The Committee on Patents, to whom was referred the memorial of William W. Woodworth, administrator of William Woodworth, deceased, with various other memorials and remonstrances against the extension of the Woodworth patent, submit the following report:

The committee have given the subject a degree of attention demanded by its importance.

On the 27th December, 1828, a patent was issued by the Commissioner of Patents to William Woodworth for a *planing machine*, which expired in 1842, at which time it was renewed for seven years, extending to 27th December, 1849. On the 26th February, 1845, nearly five years before its expiration, Congress further extended the patent seven years to the 27th December, 1856, and are now asked to extend it still further for fourteen years to the 27th December, 1870.

The committee do not deem it important to state at length the reasons upon which the application is based. It is, in brief, that during the term of the patent the parties in interest have been compelled constantly to defend it at great expense in the courts of many States, and that the patentee and his heirs have not been fairly and fully remunerated for the great benefits conferred upon the country by this invention.

Without going back of the last renewal in 1845, twelve years since, it appears evident that very large sums have been realized from the sale of territory and for the exclusive use of machines. What amount the heirs of William Woodworth, deceased, have received does not satisfactorily appear. But one payment to them of fifty thousand (\$50,000) dollars is acknowledged.

It is believed by your committee that many hundreds of thousands of dollars have been realized from this patent over and above any sums paid for its defence or otherwise; and it is certain the public have been taxed to the amount of millions on account of it.

Public sentiment and justice demand there shall be no further extension of this patent, in which your committee unanimously concur, and recommend that the prayer of the memorialist be not granted, and they be discharged from its further consideration.

